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IN TEMPLO.

A Poem,

By Fra Pietro. *signed.*

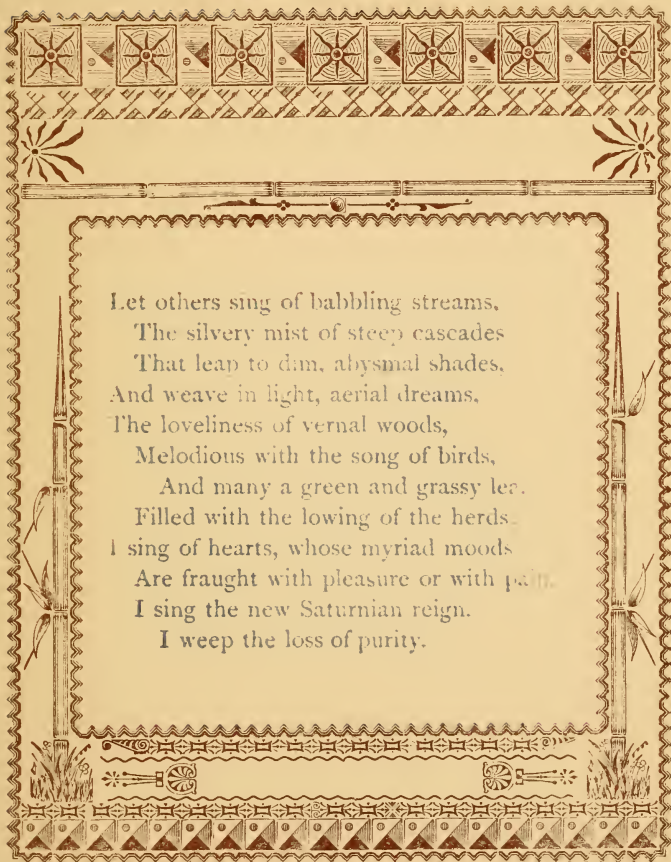
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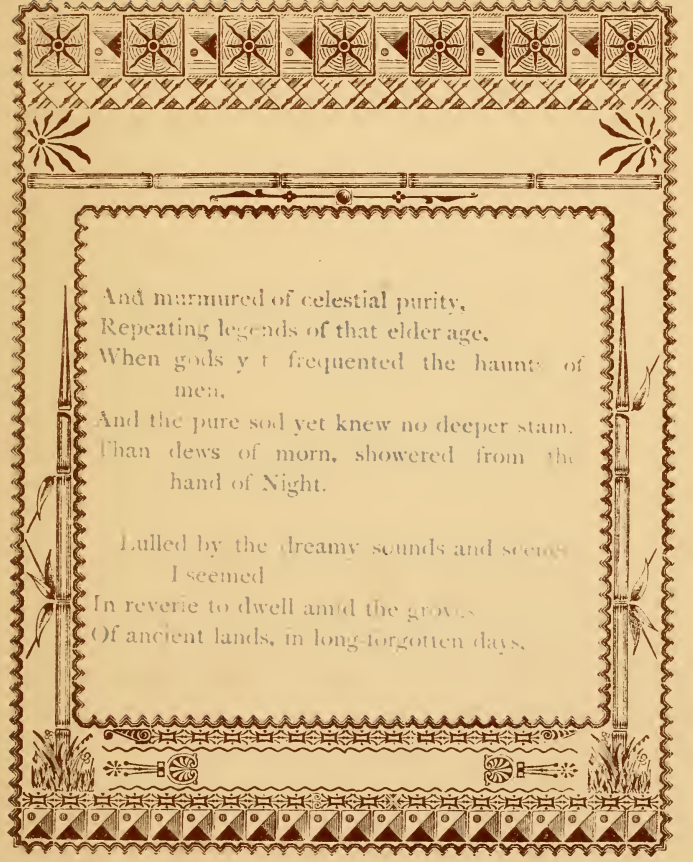


Let others sing of babbling streams,
The silvery mist of steep cascades
That leap to dim, abysmal shades,
And weave in light, aerial dreams,
The loveliness of vernal woods,
Melodious with the song of birds,
And many a green and grassy lea,
Filled with the lowing of the herds.
I sing of hearts, whose myriad moods
Are fraught with pleasure or with pain,
I sing the new Saturnian reign.
I weep the loss of purity.

THE WOOD.

SWEET were these sylvan solitudes of eve
When soft amid the ancient, broad-armed
oaks,
And branching elms, were cast the sun's last
beams;
And when the low wind whispered peace
deep peace.






And murmured of celestial purity,
Repeating legends of that elder age,
When gods yet frequented the haunts of
men,

And the pure sod yet knew no deeper stain,
Than dews of morn, showered from the
hand of Night.


Lulled by the dreamy sounds and scenes
I seemed
In reverie to dwell amid the groves
Of ancient lands, in long-forgotten days.

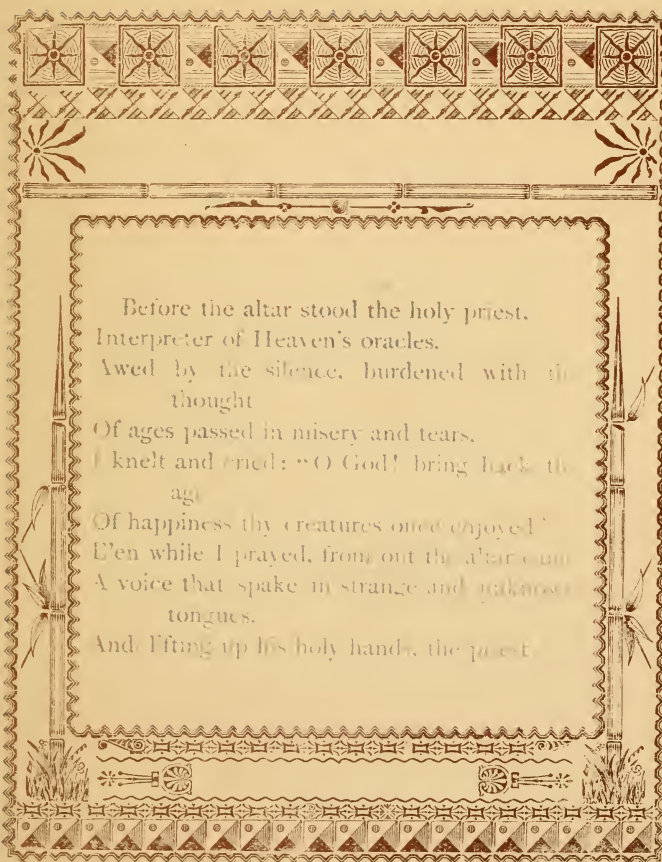


Ere yet the white-sailed gullies, hitherward
Had fled the haunts of earth and sought the
 skies.

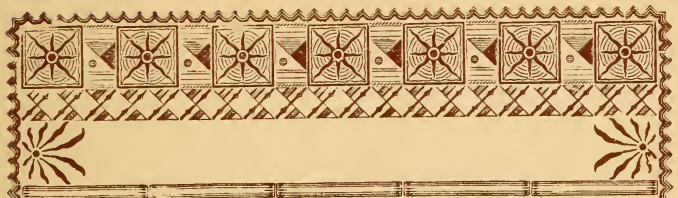
Where earth's strife and discord never come.

The forest seemed a temple, great and old,
By unseen bands of living silent all,
Save for the murmur of the evening wind,
Whose rising surges and soft cadences
Were as a hymn of praise and glory, flung
From the quivering strings of nature's harp.






Before the altar stood the holy priest,
Interpreter of Heaven's oracles.
Awe'd by the silence, burdened with the
thought
Of ages passed in misery and tears,
I knelt and cried: "O God! bring back the
age
Of happiness thy creatures once enjoyed."
E'en while I prayed, from out the altar came
A voice that spake in strange and unknown
tongues,
And lifting up his holy hands, the priest

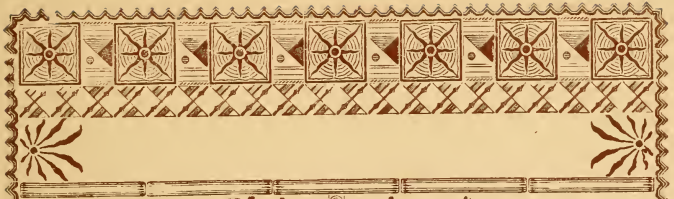


Declared: "That age shall nevermore re-
turn:

This wave of Time shall ever onward sweep,
Till on Eternity's dim shore it break;
That age shall nevermore return to bless
With joys unspeakable, the human race,
Through error, first, ye lost that high estate
Which ye enjoyed, those noble powers which
first


Gave ye exalted rank above the hosts,
Have been debased, and ye are sunk in
depths





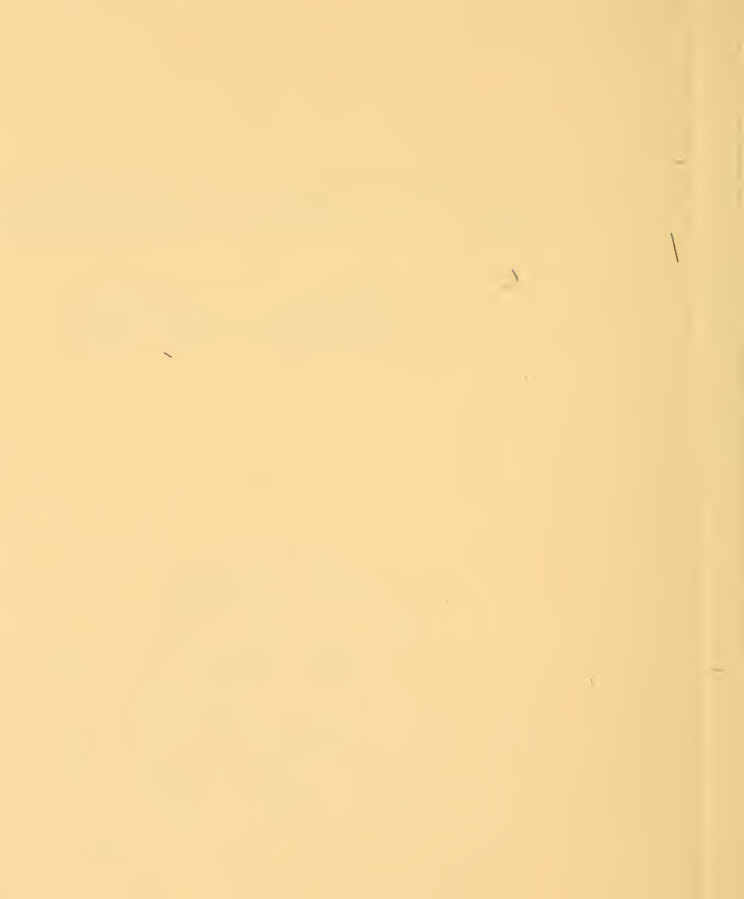
Of misery and woe deeper than the abyss,
Those powers which ministered to pleasure
first,

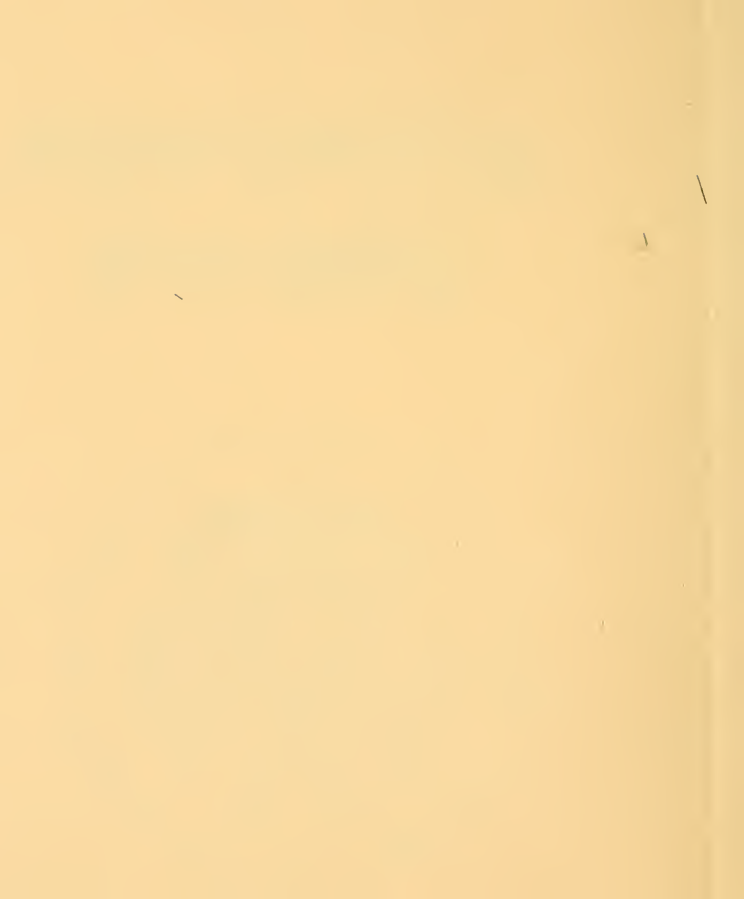
Now minister to pain : those high desires,
Those aspirations unto holiness,
No longer fill your souls : and reason's throne
By passion is usurped. Beneath the hills
The glimmering star of wisdom low is sunk :
Vice waxeth strong while virtue languisheth,
That age of happiness no more returns ;
But in the other distance comes an age,
Far fairer and far nobler than the first."

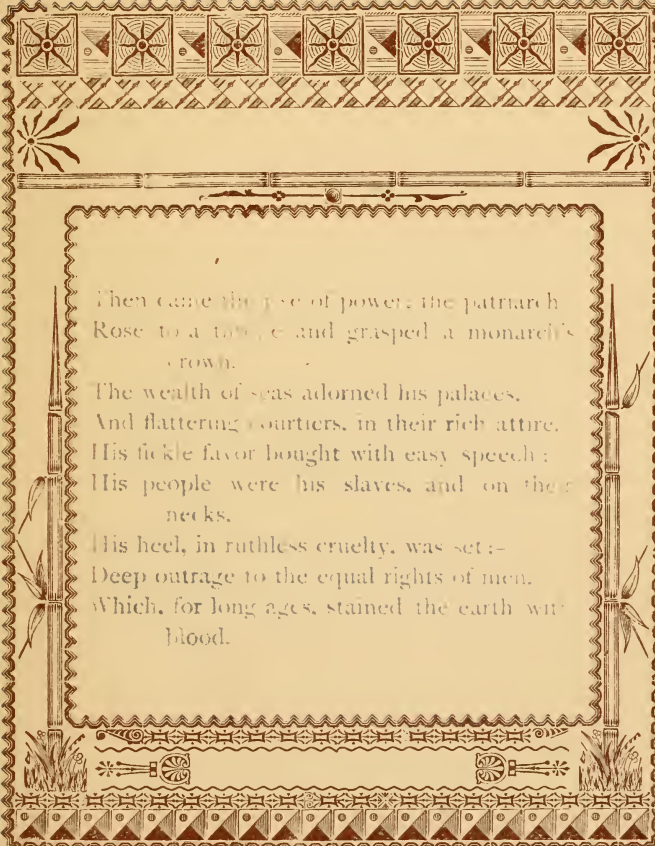


He entered, and far into the future sped
The temple walls expanded, and I saw
The other vista of the ages past.
The valley plains of Paradise, bright
With crystal rivers, home of joy and peace,
Flew the hills and valleys of Arcady,
Where in simplicity and artlessness,
The shepherd loved to watch his flock
Sleep.

The swart though humble steers would
Be taught



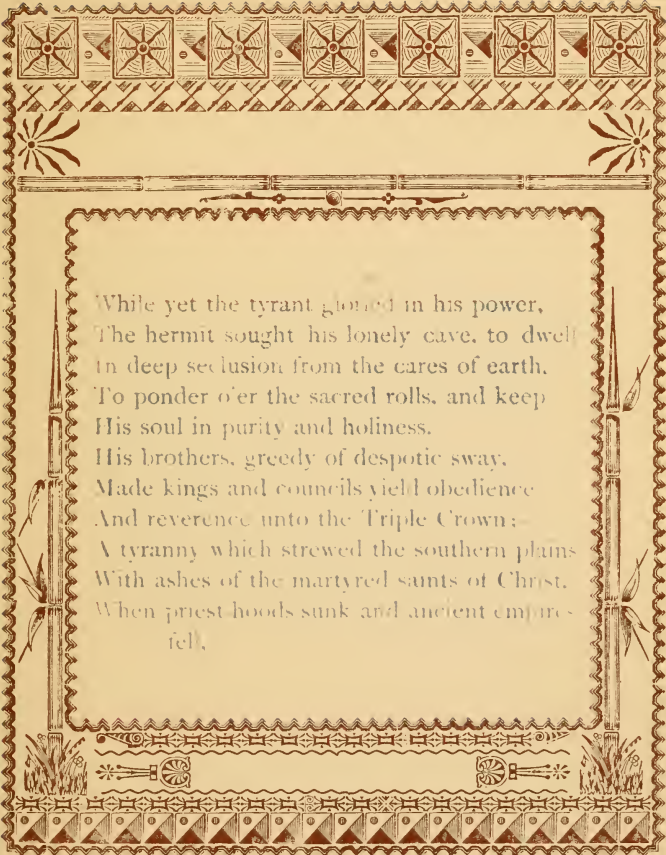




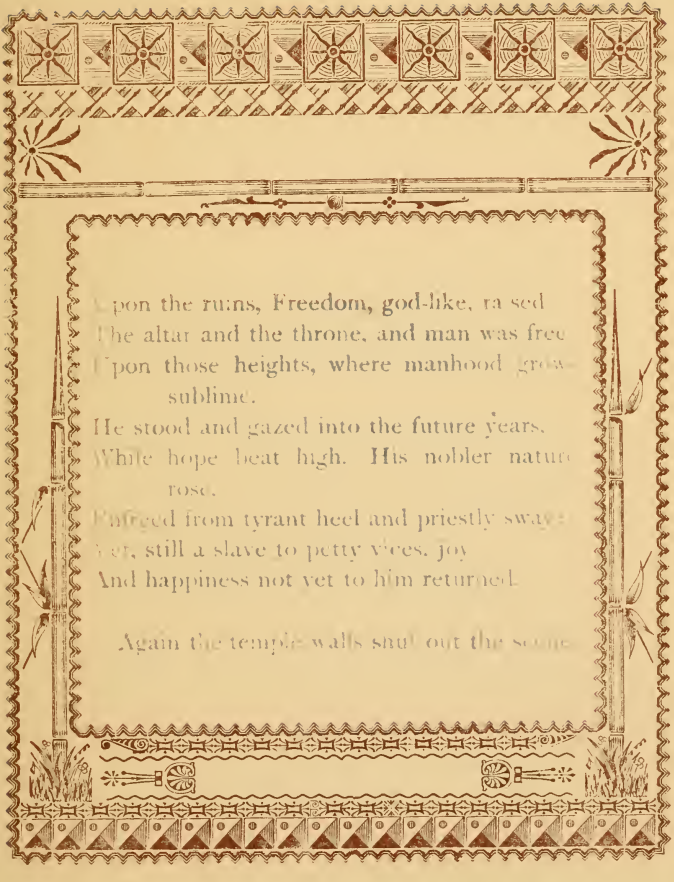
Then came the rise of power; the patriarch
Rose to a throne and grasped a monarch's
crown.

The wealth of seas adorned his palaces,
And flattering courtiers, in their rich attire,
His fickle favor bought with easy speech;
His people were his slaves, and on their
necks.

His heel, in ruthless cruelty, was set :—
Deep outrage to the equal rights of men,
Which, for long ages, stained the earth with
blood.



While yet the tyrant glomed in his power,
The hermit sought his lonely cave, to dwell
In deep seclusion from the cares of earth,
To ponder o'er the sacred rolls, and keep
His soul in purity and holiness.
His brothers, greedy of despotic sway,
Made kings and councils yield obedience
And reverence unto the Triple Crown :—
A tyranny which strewed the southern plains
With ashes of the martyred saints of Christ,
When priest hoods sunk and ancient empires
fell.



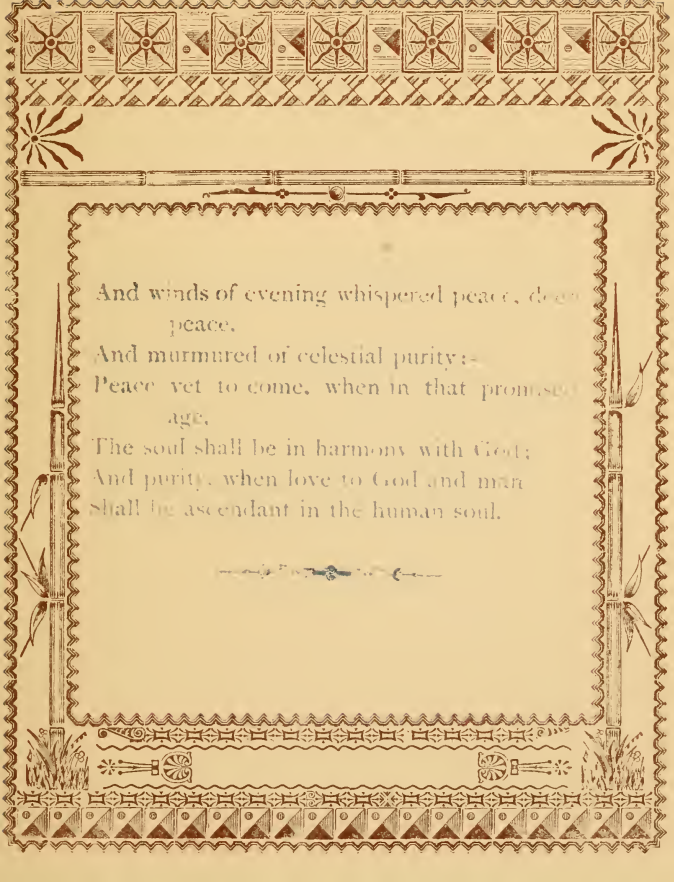
Upon the ruins, Freedom, god-like, raised
The altar and the throne, and man was free
Upon those heights, where manhood grows
sublime.

He stood and gazed into the future years,
While hope beat high. His nobler nature
rose.

Unfreed from tyrant heel and priestly sway
Yet, still a slave to petty vices, joy
And happiness not yet to him returned.

Again the temple walls shut out the scene.





And winds of evening whispered peace, deep
peace,

And murmured of celestial purity :—
Peace yet to come, when in that promised
age,

The soul shall be in harmony with God ;
And purity, when love to God and man
shall be ascendant in the human soul.



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